



SOLDIERS OF THE BLACK LIONS

STRENGTH AND HONOR

VOLUME 1 EDITION 4

BLACK LION 6

2ND BATTALION
28TH INFANTRY
REGIMENT

FEBRUARY 2009

THE BLACK LION PROWL

LTC John Reynolds – john.reynolds6@us.army.mil

February has come and the Battalion has begun to move into position in one

of Iraq's 18 provinces. The Battalion is assuming responsibility for the Karbala province which borders the Babel province. We have also welcomed B/1-77FA into our fold. The "Bulls" have moved out to PB Husayniah (about 60 KMs west of Kalsu) to align themselves with the Provincial Reconstruction Team and support the State Department folks in moving the local governments forward. Our Scouts are actively engaged in training one of the specialty platoons of the 1st Battalion, 33rd Iraqi Infantry Brigade. We have also begun our Leave program with over 74 Soldiers taking leave this month and we have another 90 Soldiers taking leave next month. I am also very proud to announce that the battalion received its Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (Combat Patch) for its participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Black Lions on a night to remember

It is with great pride to say, all I see is Blackhawk Brigade patches. I also want to thank our Ladies and Family members that continue to push us care packages and

information from the home front. Just recently we received photos of Operation Valentine that gave us great smiles of our Lion ladies as they received flowers from their Soldiers. Bush-

master continues to upgrade our force protection capability on FOB Kalsu (also just completed its yearly reenlistment objectives), the Spartans have assumed responsibility for a Quick Reaction Force for the FOB, and the House of Pain have returned from PB Husayniah as they facilitated the move for B/1-77 FA. The

Wolfpack continues to train and support the battalion through its many different staff sections. Just recently, Wolfpack won the Kalsu Sports Day trophy- great Job. We also had 9 Officers selected for promotion to CPT with two officers promotion dates effective 30 Jan—CPT Martinez and CPT McGraw. God bless – Black Lions—Strength and Honor!!!



Lionesses on a Valentines Day to Remember



BLACK LION 7



THE BLACK LION PROWL

CSM Patrick K. Akuna Jr. – patrick.akuna@us.army.mil

Aloha everyone. From the CSMs Corner I'd like to welcome you to the February edition of the Black Lion newsletter. As you would expect, the Black Lions are continuing to strive for "Excellence" and are leading the way in Standards and



Black Lion 7 and Wolfpack 7 during Superbowl

Discipline. For the month of February we initiated the Black Lion Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Program. This training program will be held on a monthly basis and will be geared toward the continued education of our 1SGs, SFCs, SSGs, and SGTs. On 1 February, SGM Spillman and I gave a class to our 1SGs and SFCs on the Centralized Promotion Board System. On the 8th, 1SG Quashie and 1SG Ybay taught our SSGs an advanced class on NCO-ERs, and later this month, the PSGs of Bravo Company will teach our SGTs an advanced class on Counseling. Now these classes are just Part I of the Black Lion NCO Professional Development Program. Part II consists of a monthly dinner hosted by the Battalion Commander and I. The dinner will be separated by Skill Level and enable our NCOs to have to opportunity to eat and converse with the two Senior Leaders of the Battalion. This will also give our NCOs an opportunity to bring up any concerns that they may have or confirm or deny any rumors that's floating out there. As of today, the dinners have been a total success and the commander and I feel it is a push in the right direction to strengthen and build the camaraderie, moral, and esprit de corps of our Noncommissioned Officers.

On the 11th we conducted our monthly promotion board and I am proud to say that SGT Bolton from Charlie Company was recommended for promotion to Staff Sergeant. We also held the NCO and Soldier of the Quarter Board for the 2nd Quarter where CPL Brown from Charlie Com-

pany won the NCO of the Quarter and PFC Sapp of Bravo Company won the Soldier of the Quarter. Both these Soldiers will represent the Black Lions at the Brigade level NCO/SOQ Board that will be held on the 13th.

Overall we are doing great here and everyday our Black Lions continue to amaze me. Whether it be on patrol, in the motor pool, PT, at the DFAC, or just everyday normal business, our Black Lion Soldiers are continuously getting after it. Everywhere on the FOB or out in sector one can hear a loud a boisterous, "BLACK LIONS SIR", "STRENGTH AND HONOR". Until next month take care and Ahui ho.

CSM Patrick K. Akuna Jr.
Black Lion 7
Strength & Honor



Senior NCO's with 10th Mountain Sergeant Major Redmore



BLACK LION HISTORIAN



On the 1st of February 2009 the "Black Lions" took part in a historic and important event. The members of Task Force 2-28 IN were awarded their Shoulder Sleeve Insignia Former Wartime Service, commonly referred to as the "Combat Patch."

For many this is their second and third deployment, but for some it is their first. No matter how many deployments they have had, the patch ceremony was special to everyone and will remain as a lasting memory from their time in Iraq during OIF 08-10. The event was marked by inspiring music, a tremendous bonfire, and even smoke that blanketed the graveled parade field.

The "Black Lions" donned their combat patches a bit later than the rest of the Black Hawk BDE because the battalion's stay in Kuwait was extended and the BDE's patch ceremony occurred while the "Black Lions" remained anxious for a mission. Some may have been disappointed to have missed the first ceremony but most appreciated the uniqueness



Black Lions gather for a historic night

of being the only battalion in the brigade to have their own ceremony.

The BDE Commander, COL Jeffery A. Sinclair, initiated the ceremony by speaking to the formation about the importance and history of the combat patch. The patch represents a willingness to serve one's country in a time of war. Even though many soldiers have in our formation have earned more than one combat patch, most of them from last deployment with 1-26 IN 2nd BCT 1ID, the BDE Commander encouraged every soldier to wear the 172nd patch as their combat patch to represent being a part of the unit's current contribution to the War on terror. Once COL Sinclair finished his speech he awarded LTC Reynolds his combat patch. Black Lion 6 then awarded his Company Commanders; from there the effect cascaded down from the commanders until the every soldier in the formation was wearing a 172nd combat patch.

The tradition of the shoulder sleeve insignia began during World War I as a symbol of unit pride. General John J. Pershing suggested all units adopt the custom of wearing the shoulder sleeve insignia from the 81st Infantry Division "Wilcats" by creating their own unique patch. The U.S. Army officially adopted this custom on October 19, 1918. By World War II, all army groups, field armies, corps, and divisions, as well as all major Army commands, had unique SSI. These SSI would often be created with symbolism alluding to the unit's forma-

tion. The 172nd Separate Infantry Brigade SSI was authorized on August 28, 1963. Its colors: blue, yellow and red represent the combat arms: Infantry, Armor and Field Artillery, respectively. The bayonet alludes to the Infantry and symbolizes attack. The mountains refer to the terrain over which the units will maneuver to gain and hold ground. The Great Dipper and North Star allude to Alaska, where the brigade was originally formed.

Though this patch is not distinctive to our homes in Germany, we still embrace it because as COL Sinclair said, "It is yours for the rest of your life, yours to give to your children, yours to show your friends, it is yours as a symbol of brotherhood and sisterhood inside of an organization that only you can make special."

Written by: 1LT Bryan Kelso
and SSG James Lesco

BLACK LION SHEPHERD

No one is sure who the original Saint Valentine was. Some say he was a priest who performed weddings not authorized by the Roman government, others say he was a Bishop who was martyred during a Roman feast which celebrated romance. There are still other traditions regarding the identity of St. Valentine, which have been stitched into the composite which forms our modern holiday. No matter what, it is nice to have a holiday on the calendar which celebrates God's gift of romance to us. (Some would argue that it is just another thing to get nailed for, when we forget.)

Do you remember the compulsory giving and receiving of Valentine's cards in grade school? Mom would buy a pack of fifty cards, the teacher



SPC Fielding and SPC Fiscalletti

would give us a class roster, and the arduous work of writing names would begin. It did not matter whether we liked someone or not, everyone got a card. As I recall, the girls were the only ones who ever actually read the cards.

We all have that special someone, or desire to have that special someone, who writes cards and sends gifts to us...and us alone. Romantic love, within the confines of moral uprightness and decorum, is holy and good. In the Bible we read things like "...Show me your face, let me hear your

voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely." God is a hopeless romantic.

It is also nice to have a circle of friends on whom we can rely, who not only love us as brothers, but who like us as friends. We are all knit together by our creeds, customs and courtesies, but there is a little something extra that makes us "buddies."

In a broader context, the American service member has become the object of infatuation. Americans are compelled by law to love the Soldier, every fifteenth of April they are reminded of the fiscal cost of freedom. In the newspapers and on the nightly news they see the sacrifice. Yet there are those who, like the girls in first grade, actually care to connect, who take an interest, who bother to "read the card."

These Americans, through their care packages, birthday cards and special greetings, remind us that Americas' sweetheart is once again the Soldier, and the Soldier's Family.

This January I received two boxes of Christmas Cards from Linda Yaneck Walsh, a citizen of Streamwood, Illinois. She had mobilized her friends, who teamed up with her to create or buy the cards. The cards contain personal notes of encouragement and some even included email addresses.

Christmas cards in January? They came to me in January because she had originally sent them to the Black Lions in Kuwait, from whence they were returned to her because we could not receive mail as a transient unit. She contacted my wife and asked when we would actually have an address in Iraq. As soon as we had that address, she sent the Christmas cards again, so we could enjoy them, even if they were a month late. Never mind that the cards had Christmas trees, Santa Claus and win-



Soldiers on Staff Duty admire Christmas Cards

tery scenes, they all said, in one way or another, “we love you.” A note attended the boxes of cards, itemizing Linda’s investment in her gift.

“Cards and Material: \$50

Postage to Iraq (Twice): \$40

Sending our love and support to the troops:

‘Priceless’”

I got a little misty eyed after reading the note.

Linda’s largess stems from a sense of pride and patriotism. We all support the troops by paying our taxes, but Linda and her crew wanted to support our mission in a personal way. They volunteered to go above and beyond.

We are an Army at war, and the operations tempo is exhausting. In this context, Soldiering has gained even more of its prestige. It has always been a noble and gallant profession, a lifestyle requiring sacrifice and strict dedication to duty. During an era of crisis,

these attributes are thrust to the fore. In a wartime Army, it ceases to be the free technical school which boasted to an earlier generation, , “we don’t ask for experience, we give it...you won’t read it in a book, you’ll live it.” Recruiting commercials now ask, one way or another, if a potential recruit is steeled for sacrifice.

Americans get it; with the new call to service has come a new appreciation for the work of the Soldier.

Americans like Linda understand the power of home front support. They know that, regardless of one’s politics, the American Soldier represents the bravest ideals and purest realities of our great country.

The love affair is not one sided. An anonymous wise man once said, “The Soldier fights, not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.” The Black Lions were flattered and humbled by the fact that someone would work so hard to express their gratitude. The Christmas cards became a type of Valentine’s card, an expression of love and support from the folks back home.

We must never forget that we fight on behalf of a grateful nation. They may not understand the work which sometimes lasts all night, or the boredom which sometimes lasts all day, but they know our work is effective, necessary, and holy. There are those who cast aspersions on the mission or who doubt the legitimacy of what we are doing. Some



SPC Geary reads a Christmas Greeting

actively work to see our efforts come to naught. These individuals may get a lot of attention and make lots of noise, but for every one of them, there are one thousand Linda’s, begging for an opportunity to bless the troops. I feel sorry for those who will never know the sense of pride that comes from being involved and engaged with this struggle for peace and freedom.

Our FRG’s know this sense of pride, and they share both the sacrifice and the glory of a job well done. So do our mothers and fathers, brothers, sisters, Family Members and friends.

Most importantly, America is praying for its troops, and God hears these prayers.

Whether you are a Family Member, Soldier, or a Supporter of the Black Lions, know that we are not alone. America loves all who are involved in the



PFC Orzel

struggle for freedom. Their gratitude is as essential to the Soldier as ammunition. Thank you Linda, for going the extra mile, and sending the Christmas cards an extra 6,377 miles. Thanks to all who support the Black Lions with your prayers and your packages. You are our Black Lions Valentines.



SPC Enorio, another grateful Soldier



BUSHMASTERS



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Hello and greetings from Forward Operation Base (FOB)

Kalsu, Iraq. We grew again this month, welcoming the Mortar Platoon ("Crazy") from HHC into the Bushmaster Team. Our company is now the largest it has been in the past year. Throughout the month of January we were busy moving from our previous location at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, to our new area of operations (AO) at FOB Kalsu. Upon arrival, we wasted no time getting our Company Command Post (CP), vehicles and equipment ready for operations. Every Bushmaster has done his part to make our company fully mission ready, whether it was building offices or securing the FOB. During the month there were two significant events: the inauguration of our new Commander-in-Chief, President Barack Obama, and the Iraqi Provincial Elections. Many Soldiers gathered in the Dining Facility (DFAC) to watch the President's inaugural address. It provided us with a great opportunity to see and hear the new Commander-in-Chief's outlook and guidance for the next several years. We also focused our attention on the Iraqi provincial elections. The elections were the first time that Iraqis could vote directly for their local leaders in a free and fair election, and their success demonstrated a great victory not only for the Iraqi people, but for our hard work and sacrifice throughout the last several years.

Although we have only been here for a month, we wasted no time beginning initial operations on FOB Kalsu and in our current AO. Throughout the month we worked on FOB perimeter walls and towers and conducted Quick Reaction Force (QRF) duty. Several leaders in the company started going out on patrols into the local towns with the units currently conducting opera-



Ssg Epstein awaits formation at FOB Kalsu

tions in the Brigade AO to get to know the streets and become familiar with the Iraqi people. All of the platoons took to the streets of Iraq in order to gauge voter participation in the Iraqi Provincial elections and to see the new and improved Iraqi Army. We were pleased to hear that many of the Iraqis were excited for the elections and looked forward to voting. The Iraqi people, even in the small towns, sensed the extreme importance of this local election. The recent American election and Presidential change-over set a great model for the Iraqis to follow

and has shown them that it is possible to have a peaceful change in leadership. Everything was quiet on Election Day. The reports from the polling places were consistently good. The Iraqis showed up to the polls in large numbers and there were no incidents of "voter irregularity" seen

by the civilian observers. These elections are the first step in Iraq's long journey towards becoming a free and peaceful country. The Bushmasters participated in the Black Lion Organizational Day, finishing second to HHC.

On January 19th the Bushmasters joined the rest of the Brigade in a remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The entire Brigade gathered together and marched to the outdoor stage where a ceremony was held to honor the late Reverend. The ceremony included a speech by the Brigade Fire Support Officer, songs by the

FOB Kalsu Choir, and concluded with Dr. Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech. The ceremony was a great opportunity to unite as a Brigade and remember that we are all members of one team.

During the month of January we had several Soldiers in the Bushmaster family decide to reenlist or "re-up" in the Army. At the beginning of the month SGT Devon Reece, our Maintenance Shop Foreman, and two of our tankers, SSG Bryant Woodberry and SGT Steven Horney reenlisted in front of the company. Later in the month, PFC Brian McPherson and PFC Joshua Tyler reenlisted with Major General Michael Oates, the Commanding General of the 10th Mountain Division. MG Oates gave each Soldier a coin for their renewed commitment to the Army. Additionally, he gave coins to 1SG Gary Ausbrooks, SFC Thomas Nunn, SPC Gabriel Matt, and SPC Timothy Ashley (who was also promoted this month). Currently, the Bushmasters are one Soldier away from being the first company in the Corps to meet their 2009 reenlistment goals. We have five Soldiers now waiting, so hopefully next month we can tell you about another competition the Bushmasters have won.

We started the month of February with the battalion combat patch ceremony. The entire battalion gathered

as one to participate in the special event complete with bonfire and torches. During the ceremony the Brigade Commander spoke to us and read the orders authorizing us to wear the 172nd Infantry Brigade patch on our right shoulder. The combat patch is placed on the Soldier's right shoulder to show that the Soldier served in combat with a particular unit and served as a member of that team. We proudly wear the 172nd combat patch as members of the Blackhawk team.

Although we have been hard at work, it has not been all business. The month ended with the excitement of Super Bowl XLIII. Following the patch ceremony we got ready for the big game as Arizona Cardinal and Pittsburgh Steelers fans gathered in the DFAC for some great American football. The DFAC was filled with soldiers cheering as their favorite teams battled it



MG Oates reenlists PFC Tyler and PFC McPherson

out on the gridiron. Many of us took advantage of a new rule which allowed each Soldier to consume two beers while we watched the Super Bowl. It was a great time but only the Steelers fans left the DFAC happy that night.

In closing we would like to thank everyone back home for all of your help and support. We greatly appreciate all of the packages and letters you send us daily. We would like to send a special thanks to SFC Nunn's wife who has created a website dedicated to the Bushmasters. Mrs. Nunn is constantly updating the website with pictures we send her, so please visit the site and try to find your Soldier. Additionally, there is a page dedicated to Friends and Family where you can post pictures for us to see the home front. If you would like to view the webpage please go to www.228bushmasters.com.

Continue to stay safe. We wish everyone a Happy Valentine's Day. Please stay in touch with us and the Family Readiness Group. Please send questions and/or concerns to SGT James Cooper, Tina Ausbrooks or use our email addresses.

Kaphar Hunnu Bhandu Marnu Ramro! Bushmasters!



SPARTANS



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The Spartans have had an eventful time since their arrival to wonderful FOB Kalsu. It took Charlie Company a little while to get to the final destination in Iraq. However, once the Spartans arrived at Kalsu, it did not take long for them to get down to business.

The Spartans have occupied themselves with various missions, events and activities. The Spartans have a routine of several tasks to fulfill in order to help accomplish the various missions of the Black Lion Battalion. Escort missions to help aid the Support Battalion in their movements of material have been regular part of the Spartan life. Going out the wire to support the effort in any way possible is certainly the more visible feature of the work the Spartans do in Kalsu. However, making sure

the trucks and equipment work as efficiently as possible is also essential and part of the regular work load in Iraq. Not a day goes by that the Spartans are not moving full speed to ready the vehicles and equipment and accomplish the missions at hand. In addition to the work, there have been several events in which the Spartans have had the opportunity to participate.

To commemorate the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., many Spartans took part in a memorial march across FOB Kalsu. Indeed, it is a grand thing that soldiers at war on the other side of the world took the time to celebrate the work of Dr. King.

During the time of the Iraqi Provincial Elections, many soldiers competed in several tournaments during Black Lion Sports Day. The pugil-stick competition was an exciting crowd-pleaser. Not surprisingly, the Spartans had some powerhouse competitors in the event. SGTs Rylance and Wright with PFC Fretz were all finalists in the heavy-weight class. SGT Rylance was the Spartan who reigned in the end with several devastating wins, including a knockout shot. The Spartans also represented the company very well on the basketball courts finishing second only to HHC. Altogether, the Spartans demonstrated true warrior spirit against their fellow soldiers and did the company proud.

On the night of the Super Bowl the Soldiers of Charlie Company received their combat patches for their service with the 172nd Brigade Combat Team. This momentous occasion was followed by celebratory events. The two beers each allotted to each Soldier for the Super Bowl was a welcomed facet of these events. Sipping a couple of brews with fellow soldiers on a cool Iraqi night was a great finishing touch.

As Valentine's Day approaches, the importance of Family and the endless support they lend to their Soldiers is especially keen. Family Members are not far from Spartan soldiers' hearts. They send their thanks and love to their families waiting patiently at home for the Spartans' return. Family is the foundation upon which all of the work Soldiers do is based. The value of the families' support is incalculable.



Spartan Heavy-Weights.



SPC Neuman drives to the basket



PAIN

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Hello yet again from C Tank! It has been a month since the last company newsletter and many things have happened since that time. The Super Bowl, the combat patch ceremony, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial march, and the swearing in of the new Commander in Chief to name a few. The company has finished two months of its year deployment and time really seems to be flying by. So with regard to brevity it is time to jump right to the important stuff.

The company celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday by participating in a memorial march in honor of his contributions to the civil rights movement that took place during the 1960's. The company marched in formation to a stage

where a band and several key note speakers were located. The brigade chaplain started the ceremony with an invocation that was led by the singing of the American national anthem. From there the company listened to several speeches followed by the playing of some very memorable music by the FOB Kalsu choir. The finale of the entire ceremony was a luncheon at the Fob Kalsu DFAC. Overall, the ceremony accomplished several things. It put into perspective to how far the country and the military have come in the past half century regarding equal opportunity and the rights of every man (and woman of course). The ceremony also allowed soldiers to take off from work for a few hours and relax and participate in a ceremony commemorating an American icon.

The month of January also saw the swearing in

of our new president, the first African American elected to the post, President elect Barack Obama. The swearing in ceremony was televised at the FOB Kalsu MWR center. Many members

fire but also smoke pots and loud music. Many soldiers of the company stated that they would always remember this ceremony because it was clear that the brigade spent many hours preparing for it.

The Super Bowl was the culmination of February 1st. Every single individual fell into one of three groups that night. The first group consisted of football infatuated soldiers. The second group was filled with those who do not like football. The final group was filled with everyone else

who could care less what was going on as long as they got the two beers provided to them via the Army. As most know, General Order #1 prohibits the drinking of alcohol in Iraq. It was recently handed down that each soldier in Iraq will be given two beers during the Super Bowl. The time spent drinking this rare luxury was enjoyed by all, even those who do not normally drink.



SPC Bolton receives coin from CG

of Charlie Tank attended the viewing of the swearing in. The company was able to view history being made despite being deployed in Iraq.

February 1st was a very important day for the company. The day was filled with the combat patch ceremony and the Super Bowl. The combat patch ceremony was conducted in very elaborate fashion, involving not only a huge bon-



SGT Smith re-enlists

C Tank will be moving shortly from their current operating base at FOB Kalsu to another FOB in Karbala. The mailing address will not change. The mail will still go to FOB Kalsu and will be picked up many times a month to be delivered in some way to the soldiers of the company. The soldier's feelings are of a mixed bunch. Many are happy to have a mission finally after two months of their deployment already being fulfilled. A few others of the company do not wish to give up their CHUs' here at FOB Kalsu. The living arrangements at either FOB manage to maintain a significant quality of life, however some soldiers will miss the more "luxurious" ones here at FOB Kalsu. However, no matter where the company goes the soldiers are professionals and will make the most out of whatever they are given.

The company has also seen some personnel changes, yet again. The company's fire power was significantly increased when the battalion attached a platoon of Scouts to it. However, with the mission recently given to C Pain, it has become clear that the Scouts will not be joining us. The company wishes the Scouts the best of luck in the future where ever they may go.

The month of January also saw several promo-

tions. So without further delay, congratulations to the following individuals: SSG Mallari and SGT Hawk. These NCO's have proven themselves to be leaders and the Army has given attention to their professionalism by increasing their rank. Congratulations again to SSG Mallari and SGT Hawk!

The MWR provided FOB Kalsu an opportunity to see several US Olympic medalists as the competitors toured Iraq in support of the troops fighting for freedom across the world. There were several gold medalists in attendance; but Michael Phelps was nowhere to be seen.

There were however two

gymnast in attendance, which might have been more of a crowd pleaser than Michael Phelps.

February 1st was also filled with sporting events for a battalion fun day. Each company provided teams for basketball and flag football. There were also spots available for a pugil stick competition. SGT Llewellyn of HQ's company won the championship in his weight class after literally knocking out his opponent. The C-Tank basketball team made it to the semi finals before falling to the company with the most soldiers, HHC. Overall, the competition allowed the battalion a day off to play some team sports.

Well, that just about wraps it up for the month of January in Iraq for C Tank. As always, the soldiers are staying safe and anxiously awaiting their opportunity to get home yet again to be with their loved ones. At the current pace of things the deployment will be over sooner than anyone realizes.



WOLFPACK



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The “Wolfpack”, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, has been hard at work since their arrival here at FOB Kalsu. The 5 platoons and 9 sections that comprise the Company are those elements of the Battalion that have a mission regardless of enemy or operational activity. Simply put, this Company never stops.

The main effort for the company has remained; preparing the battalion’s equipment and Soldiers for upcoming operations. Through maintenance and training they have accomplished this monumental task. Pride element continues to enhance the battalion Commander’s situational awareness, keeping him and his staff safe during his schedule of battlefield rotations.

Both the Scouts and the Mortars departed the formation for cross attachment to line companies as the Battalion departed Kuwait. With C/3-66 AR receiving their new AO, the Scouts are back with the Wolfpack, and

the company is happy to have them back. The Mortar Platoon remains cross attached with B/2-28IN however the Company maintains close ties.



SCOUTS AND MORTARS



The Scouts of 2-28 arrived at Camp Kalsu in two waves earlier this month. The first group arrived the week of 14 January and the second arrived three days later. The first group of Scouts were assigned to Combat Housing Units to live in. The second half (the majority of the platoon), were assigned to Tents. Regardless of the situation the Scouts kept their morale high. They were enthusiastic about finally arriving in theater.

Upon arrival the Platoon immediately began working towards becoming fully mission capable in supporting C-Tank 3-66. The Scouts attended a zeroing range for their M4 rifles and HUMVEE rollover training 17JAN09. The Platoon was a 100% in Go’s for both events. A Quick Reaction Force training exercise was conducted on 28JAN09 in order to show the battalion that the Scouts can arrive quickly anywhere in sector to provide support for fellow Black Lions. Successful in every way the Platoon is 100% fully mission capable and ready for any operation that the battalion could assign them. All 1151’s and MRAP’s were QAQC’d and loaded with supplies and ammunition.



SGT Vincent, Wolfpack’s newest sergeant recites the NCO Creed



DFAC (DINING FACILITY)



In the past month, the cooks of HHC 2-28 have been continuously active. Completing their movement, finding a job and of course keeping their motivation high were three key tasks for Soldiers and their leadership. At the beginning of the New Year, the



Wolfpack Cooks, PFC Padgett and PVT Woodall

cooks were ready to leave Camp Buering and finally fly to Fob Kalsu. During the movement they went through a lot of moving around, bedding down and waiting. There were long days and short nights, but it was all worth while when they departed the Black Hawk and greeted their brethren who had flown earlier. After a long day of running around and flying they got to their new home.

After getting acclimated to their new home, the cooks settled down to work in the DFAC, where, rather than cook they found their job was to advise and supervise the civilian cooks. Their attention to sanitation has been key to keeping the rest of the battalion safe and full of tasty meals. In their spare minutes the platoon is getting good training, learning the administrative side of dining facility management, MRAP operations and Combat Life saving Skills.

The platoon is proud to welcome a new soldier straight out of AIT. This gives them the chance to train him and impart the skills that they have learned from their leaders.

Today the cooks continue to improve their position and keep their heads up. They improve the civilians in the DFAC daily and make it a safe and healthy environment for their fellow soldiers.

HEADQUARTERS

Over the past month Headquarters Platoon has also shown their true strength and ability to overcome whatever obstacles may lie in their path to victory. Upon arriving in Fob Kalsu, Headquarters Platoon, led with distinction by Staff Sergeant Quintanilla and Sergeant Nummerdor has built one of the finest Tactical Operations Centers on the post. Headquarters Soldiers have attended numerous training events, from MRAP drivers training to Combat Lifesaver Skills training, courses which not only count for military education but also for promotion points.

The month of January held a few social events of great significance. The first was the Battalion Birthday party which honored all soldiers with January Birthdays. Our very own Sgt. Knudsen was honored to attend. January 27 there was a dinner for select



Wolfpack's own SGT Anderson, as the oldest Soldier in the Battalion, prepares to cut the Combat Patch Ceremonial cake. PFC Kirkland (Left) is the youngest.

NCO leadership from the Battalion. SSG Caiado, SSG Smith, and SSG Acosta were honored to attend while Command Sergeant Major Akuna and Lieutenant Colonel Reynolds encouraged the NCO corps to keep doing great things in order to maintain the high standards the Black Lions have. 31JAN09 the Scouts participated and represented Charlie 3-66 in the Black Lion field day. The Black Lion field day was a day set aside for soldiers to relax and have friendly competition against one another. PFC Fiore was proud to be the winner of the lightweight pugil stick competition and is to be awarded an Army Achievement Medal for his actions. The rest of the platoon competed vigorously in Basketball, Football, and the MRAP Crew Drill.

The 21st of January SSG Ciado and SPC Wisz re-enlisted both to stay in the Unit, and SSG Smith re-enlisted 25th of January to go become an instructor at Fort Knox, Kentucky. PFC Machado and Housinger were promoted to SPC in January both strong leaders that will make a quick impact on the Scout Platoon.

Since arriving in Kalsu, the Wolfpack has received the Combat Patch, won the Battalion Sports Day tournament with a clean sweep of all team events and has improved its position in preparation for receipt of mission.



MEDIC PLATOON - SCALPEL



Greetings from the Black Lion Medics. The medics have been very busy this past month since they arrived at FOB Kalsu. The area that was given to them to use as an aid station was in no way ready to receive patients. As soon as they "hit the ground," they started running. The work that they have done to convert these two tents into an aid station and a training area is phenomenal. From building doors to putting up walls and shelves, all of the improvements were done by the medics with the exception of the new lighting which had to be done by the local contractors.

The medics are running 24 hour operations to support the Black Lion team. When they are not on shift they are training. In the past week, the medics held a "Best Medic" competition. The medics had to cycle through six different lanes each with a different scenario. The purpose of the completion was to test their knowledge on scenarios the medics might encounter while here in Kalsu. This was a very good training exercise for them because



Soldiers cleaning? No more excuses why they can't do this at home.



Before



After

a

lot of the scenarios were not your everyday sick call procedures. They not only practiced their skills, but also learned new techniques and procedures in the process. The winner of the "Best Medic" competition was PFC Daniel Phillips. Right now the medics are training for a Brigade training exercise which will take place at night. The medics will arrive on a scene, have to assess the situation and treat the casualties using what they know and what they have learned. This is excellent training for them because they will not know what to expect. Each medic will be evaluated on their ability to make medical decisions and their knowledge on how to treat casualties at the POI (Point of Injury).

The medics are also staying busy by giving classes to the rest of the Black Lions. They are conducting weekly CLS (Combat Life Saver) classes, as well as, IV classes twice a week. This not only teaches other Soldiers on the Black Lion team how to save lives, but also hones their medical skills.

The medics had one promotion this month. Joseph George was promoted from PFC to SPC. SPC George has been working very hard and is very deserving of his promotion.

The medics are doing great things for the Black Lions and hope all is well back home. "Strength and Honor"



SUPPORT PLATOON



The Road Dawgz of Support Platoon have led the way during the Black Lion's integration into FOB Kalsu, Iraq. From Day 1 the Road Dawgz hit the ground running and have not looked back. The first three weeks on ground flew by thanks to a multitude of duties, responsibilities, events, and training. They have done an excellent job maintaining their motivation and remaining focused on the overall mission at hand.

Support Platoon, like the rest of the Battalion, came into Iraq not knowing exactly what their mission would be and what the operational tempo

would look like. Pushing aside the ambiguity, Support Platoon inherently put one foot in front of the other and blazed it's own path accomplishing several necessary tasks from the start. After a lot of leg work, paper-work, and communication was completed the connections were made and the accounts

were set up for both Ammunition and Fuel for the Battalion. SGT Rommel Stoute and SSG Steven Cooper led the charge in regards to fuel and SGT Steven Marley was the power-player when it came to ammo.

The living situation on FOB Kalsu, although not immediately ideal, would become more comfortable with the consistent work by their Platoon Sergeant, SFC Newcomb. SFC Newcomb made the decision to get the tents needed to ensure his soldiers had enough space to have some privacy along with being comfortable. Although the tents are slightly less comfortable than the two man Container Housing Units (CHU's)



*Support Platoon's Winning MRAP Evacuation Team –
From Left: PFC Lumba, SPC Lane, SPC Julian, PFC Creel, SGT Gettys, SPC Stacy*

that most of the Brigade are living in, for the mission of Support Platoon Mission the tents are a good fit. They are closer to the Battalion and Company Headquarters and the Motor Pool. They also allow for better command and control and accountability throughout the platoon. Support Platoon spent a few VERY cold nights when the heaters broke but in less than 48 hrs SFC Newcomb had space heaters installed and made sure KBR's priority was fixing the permanent heaters. The addition of wall lockers and Soldier's



SGT Marley all geared up during the Pugal Sticks Bout.

own personal touch of home created a good habitat for the Road Dawgz.

The largest impact on quality of life for the Soldiers of Support Platoon was without a doubt the day they received mail for the first time since leaving

pen. SGT Marley and PV2 Serrano brought a Cargo HEMMT and teamed up with B Co Recovery section and their M88 Tank Recovery Vehicle. With a little careful driving and some heavy lifting they managed to move a 20ft Connex from the Motor Pool up to the

competition representatives from all the companies took part in Football, Basketball, Puegal Sticks, and a MRAP Evacuation Drill events. HHC Dominated the day winning three of the four events. Support Platoon was at the forefront of each of those wins. The winning Basketball team included three Support Platoon Soldier, SSG Cooper, SGT Coursey, and PFC Conley. The Football team was lead by SPC Lindsey, PFC Pickard, PFC Enis, PFC Jones, PFC Quiles, and 1LT Bourne. SGT Marley was a force to be reckoned with in the Puegal Sticks. The greatest performance of the day went to the MRAP Evacuation team. Six Soldiers from each of the Platoons in the Battalion were timed as they exited a MRAP, ran 100 meters to a simulated casualty, properly secured him on a litter, and returned him safely into the vehicle securing him and themselves by properly buckling up. SGT Gettys, SPC Lane, SPC Stacy, SPC Julian, PFC Lumba, and PFC Creel dominated their competition and with the best time in the Battalion by 20 seconds. They represented Support Platoon well making all the Road Dawgz proud and completed Support Platoon's preeminence within the Battalion. The weekend did not stop there. Support Platoon received their "Combat Patches" during a powerful ceremony at Brigade Headquarters, celebrated and relaxed with two REAL beers and capped off the weekend of fun by taking in one of the most exciting Super Bowls ever!

Support Platoon went back to work refreshed

Grafenwoehr. Once the Battalion finally made it to a permanent location an address could be utilized, but that was only half of the battle. It took a joint effort between Support Platoon and 1LT Garrison of B Co to facilitate the mail capabilities for the Battalion. In order to receive mail the Battalion needed a "mail room", somewhere mail could be stored under double lock and key and organized/sorted according to Army regulations. 1LT Garrison and 1LT Bourne combined their efforts, man power, and resources to make it hap-

Battalion HQ's, giving the Black Lion's a mail room. Since then the mail has not stopped flowing.

After working tirelessly for the first three weeks in Kalsu, Support Platoon was due for a much needed break. They got that break during the last weekend in January. While the Iraqi people were exercising their democratic right to vote in record numbers and providing their own security the Black Lions took advantage of the lull in operational tempo and took part in Black Lions Sports Day. In an intra-Battalion



SSG Cooper showing off his Support Platoon Pride during the Basketball Tournament.



SFC Newcomb and 1LT Bourne headed out to a meeting.

and rejuvenated, with a sense of accomplishment from what they had done and a motivated spirit to tackle the new missions on the horizon.



MAINTENANCE PLATOON



HHC Maintenance platoon focus for the past month has been identifying faults and correcting them to get the Black Lion vehicles combat ready. They also worked on modifications which consisted of fabricating brackets so additional spotlights and Infrared lights could be added to the vehicles for added visibility for the Wolf pack Soldiers while conducting night operations. They fabricated overhead covers to the turrets to protect the gunners from thrown grenades. They also added tow straps to the front of each vehicle for quick extraction of a vehicle if needed.

They installed LED headlights instead of the existing old conventional headlights and replaced the existing springs with heavy Duty ones for a more Stable and comfortable ride. What was once called the rat claw was no longer available to the unit. So HHC Maintenance formulated a plan to fabricate one. They took M113A3 cables that are stronger and used the plasma cutter and grinder to make what we now call the lion claw for the entire Battalion. HHC Maintenance also received and modified electronic turrets for the 1151's that are were intended to be used for the M-1114. These electric turrets which are normally installed by civilians in a spe-

HHC Maintenance platoon will never fail their brothers and never leave fail to accomplish any mission



Maintenance team hard at work

cialty shop Which was not available to the soldiers of HHC Maintenance. Instead of wasting time and man hours the Soldiers took it upon themselves to install them. Once the vehicles were completed after weeks of working day and night the Soldiers of HHC Maintenance were proud to see what they have accomplished for their brothers in arms. You can tell a Black Lion vehicle from any other vehicles on the FOB because pride was put into it and it really shows. The vehicles that they received were in a bad state of desperate repair but they picked up their tools and accomplished what many would never thought was possible in the time given. Once finished they made the vehicles look as if they had just been produced by the factory. In final words of the HHC Maintenance platoon they will never fail their brothers and never fail to accomplish any mission.

The Black Lion battalionAlso had a sports day on 31 January 2009. SGT Peterson, SGT Toomer and PFC Jensen showed their skills on the Wolfpack basketball team by conquering the Spartans 38-22. SGT Salazar, SPC Metz, SPC McClellan and PFC Berry competed in the pugil stick tournament PFC Berry took 2nd place in the 165 lb weight class. SPC Leake, PFC Patterson, and PFC Lewis participated on the Wolfpack football team and truly showed who the better Soldier was by beating Bravo Company 12-6. At the end of the day when all was said and done Wolfpack took home the winning trophy over the whole battalion once again. It is with these fine Soldiers in the Wolfpack company, serving with pride and distinction that make it possible for Wolfpack to be the greatest company out there.



FISTERS



Black Lion Colors

On February 1, 2009, the Black Lions joined the ranks of the Black Hawk Brigade in receiving the 172nd SIB Combat Patch. As part of their contribution to OIF 07-09, the Black Lions donned their combat patches with pride. For many Soldiers, on their first deployment, this is a rite of passage. They now join a brotherhood of combat veterans serving their country

both past and present. For this Brigade and for the Black Lions, this patch has a significant meaning. The brigade commander began by explaining the difference between the patch that is worn on the left sleeve versus the patch that is earned on the right. The left sleeve patch represents the organization that you are assigned to, the unit that you belong to when you

boots hit the ground. COL Sinclair further explained how the patch that is worn on the right sleeve is significantly different, "The combat patch that you are awarded is about you. It is a patch that becomes your personal property and you take it with you for the rest of your life. It is a patch that you wear in a formation, it is a patch that you can give to your sons or daughters, your mom or dad, a brother or sister; any family member because it's your personal property".

He then proceeded to award Black Lion 6 (Commander) and Black Lion 7 (Command

"The combat patch that you are awarded is about you. It is a patch that becomes your personal property and you take it with you for the rest of your life...." "



Blackhawk Command gathering in front of the BH bonfire.

Sergeant Major) their combat patch. They in turn presented their company Commanders and First Sergeants with their patches. And so the procession went until every Black Lion was awarded the combat patch.

For every member of the Black Lions, it is a patch that is well-deserved and has been a long time coming. Many of the Soldiers journey began with the redeployment from Iraq in 2007, followed by the move to Grafenwoehr, then the training spent in the Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels Training

Areas prepping for what they were going to be faced with once we were in Iraq, and finally the many long hours spent packing and moving equipment and vehicles. Throughout the process the Black Lions have adapted, persevered, and overcome every obstacle in their way to “stand ready and represent something true. Based on our brotherhood and sisterhood when you come together, the United States military has the tradition to give you a combat patch, to remind you of your service, to remind you of your sacrifice, and to remind you of the brothers and sisters that you serve with”, stated Black Hawk 6. The Brigade Commander ended by saying, “there are several people in the United States of America that want to associate with you because they

want to know the kind of man or woman that stands for something bigger than themselves and goes forward. Civilians want to understand that the patch ceremony that takes place to recognize that selfless sacrifice to go forward and serve our nation, our constitution is for that combat patch that individual is wearing. This night is for all the great warriors that have come together to receive that combat patch.”



Black Lion 6 thanks civilians for setting up the ceremony by giving them the Black Lion Coin.



ASSAULT PLATOON

Over the last few weeks, the Assault Platoon moved from the confines of Camp Beuhring to FOB KALSU and within a couple days of arriving, we began receiving our MRAPS and 1151's from Kuwait. As we received vehicles work to render them 100% mission capable began, the platoon has worked tirelessly never missing a beat, and everyone has shown an unimaginable amount of persistence and patience on our way to achieving some of these short term goals. Included in the daily grind was a healthy dose of other tasks to be accomplished.

Assault platoon has established itself in leading the battalion, by setting the standards to be met by all line companies on vehicle SOPS's for load plans and tie downs. The battalion adopted these SOP's implemented across TF 2-28 IN. Load plans have been part of a daily operations, constantly refining and improving our position. Issues concerning an efficient way to mount PVC piping on the MRAP's, for

traveling through areas with low hanging wires was tackled next. Again it was one of assault platoon's soldiers who is being credited for setting the standard that the battalion has since adopted for all MRAP vehicles.

Within the first week key platoon leadership began running partnered missions with 1/10 Cav 4th ID, doing reconnaissance of the local area. On subsequent missions other soldiers from the platoon were given the chance to leave the wire and see what was outside and learn what to expect from the convoy leader and the locals. We find the area to be quiet and lush, with farmland all around and clean roads. Almost immediately after receiving the MRAP vehicles everyone became very proficient in its characteristics and mechanics. Training has commenced in such areas as; C.R.E.W systems, CLS, MRAP's maintainers



PFC Sanders reenlisted 7 February

course, MRAP's drivers training course, Counter I.E.D training, react to IED, recovery of downed vehicles, casevac/medevac. Included in our training has been night time driver training with thermal truck sights and night vision goggles. Recently everyone was given an opportunity to participate in the Black Lion Game Day; assault

platoon was well represented on the football team as it headed to an HHC victory over all other companies within our formation.

Our platoon has also started to experience some changes amongst the ranks. SFC Magrum has joined forces with SFC(P) Bair as joint platoon sergeants in preparation for upcoming promotion of SFC Bair to Master Sergeant, the platoon has been spending some time bringing SFC Magrum up to speed on our platoon TTP's and SOP's. The soldiers who did not already know SFC Magrum are adjusting to his leadership style comfortably. As of two days ago all soldiers were awarded their combat patch, in a ceremony with music and a bon fire, making them forever a part of TF 2-28IN, and the 172nd INF BDE.

Assault platoon's soldiers are truly one of a kind being one of the most diverse platoons that this battalion has to offer, each one is gaining the experience of working with Soldiers of others MOS's and are doing very well. In closing, this soldier would like to say he is proud to be part of this platoon with its great leadership and diversity, he is also proud to call himself a BLACK LION. "LOVE OF COUNTRY CONQUERS"



STAFF SECTIONS-S1 (HUMAN RESOURCES)



The S-1 Shop has been busy, maintaining accountability of not just the 291 Soldiers in the Wolfpack, but also of the 746 Black Lions in the battalion. As if that weren't enough they have and processed more than 80 awards and 120 personnel actions.

Over the past month the personnel section had two Soldiers promoted. D'Tavious Floyd who oversees the shops Enlisted Promotions paperwork (Private – Staff Sergeant) and serves as the Battalion's senior postal clerk; as well as assisting in records updating and Unit Status Reporting (USR) was promoted to Specialist (SPC). Jonathan Flores who is responsible for actions such as command sponsorships and housing or dependent pay changes to name a few, as well as assisting in the updating of service members records was promoted to Specialist as well. Throughout this month Ser-



SGT Bayles has proven himself to be a quick viable asset since his addition to the unit.

geant (SGT) Christopher Bayles has increased his responsibility within the shop. By assuming lead responsibility of Personnel Status Report-

ing for the whole Battalion and the role as a squad leader overseeing all shop processes in the absence of a Staff Sergeant; SGT Bayles has proven himself to be a quick viable asset since his addition to the unit. Sergeant First Class Chad Wise has continued to prove key leadership on and off the job as well as key developmental mentorship. During this month SPC Lewis Sais has diligently worked on and retrieved awards for Black Lion members who have either retired or moved on to other assignments; while SGT Abdul Lubwama has put

countless hours to ensure zero deficiencies Environmental Morale Leave processing and scheduling possessed zero deficiencies.



Staff sections represented at the Patch Ceremony

S-2 INTELLIGENCE

Meanwhile, several doors down the hall, the S-2 shop as been engrossed in learning the personalities and the culture of the Battalion's new AO. While C/3-66 AR is the only land-owning company in the battalion, the Black Lions have had to learn all of the adjacent areas in order to facilitate our response to election related violence. Luckily there was none.

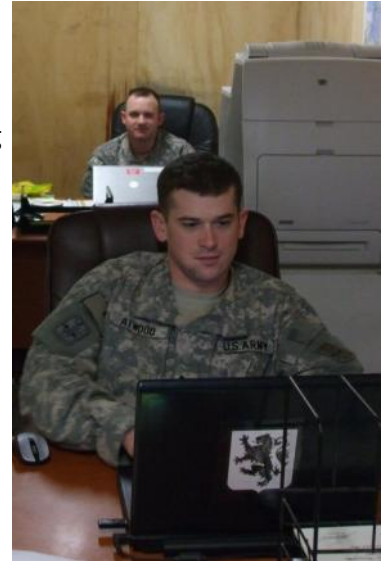


S3 (OPERATIONS)



Though the men of S3 mourn the loss of Kuwait's amenities, we have adjusted well to the life-style of FOB Kalsu. Living quarters have improved, giving the men their privacy and raising their moral. Other moral boosters are the addition of two 36 Cup Institutional Coffee Makers to our Tactical Operations Center, one Chevy Trailblazer, a live Armed Forces Network feed into our Tactical Operations Center, five out of six operational air conditioners, and three Porta-Johns tactically located outside of our Tactical Operations Center.

Life here can be rough, but we get by. With our new battle rhythm in place we are here to support the Black Lions by coordinating training, publishing orders, planning future operations and tracking the movement of all personnel and equipment. With a high dose of caffeine we continue to synchronize the battalion throughout our deployment. Despite our widespread focus we still find the time to appreciate the soldiers in our formation. The men and Harvey of S3 would again like to congratulate Nicholas Halkowitz and Matthew Patterson for their well deserved promotion to Specialist. Also, congratulations to SSG Raja Richardson and SSG Carl Bishop for their reenlistment. Both have decided to stay in our Army indefinitely. HOOAH!



Serious planning goes on in this office.



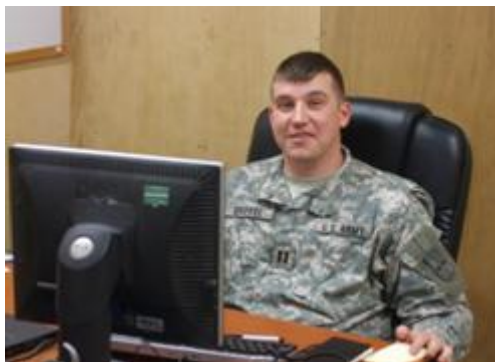
S4 (LOGISTICS)



Upon occupying FOB Kalsu, the Black Lions immediately began improving their position, and the S4 shop had its work cut out for it. What furniture remained in the headquarters buildings was in poor condition, some of it dangerously so. Bare concrete barriers all over the

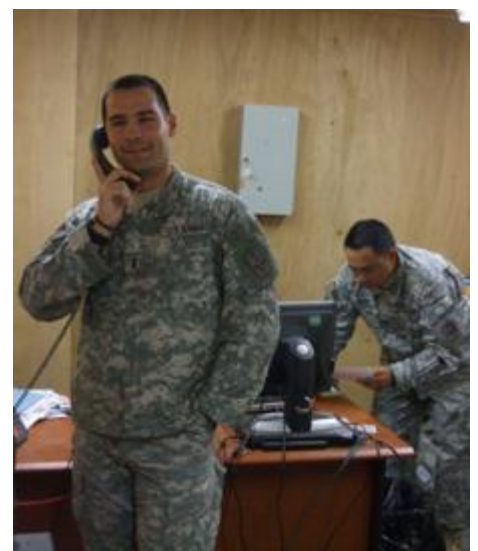
FOB needed to be emblazoned with Black Lion logos. Our new MRAPs needed modifications to move through the crowded streets of Iraqi cities.

Our task before us, the soldiers of the S4 Shop spent the month of January requisitioning the supplies and equipment required to make these improvements. With Field Ordering Officer funds, PR&C packets, and the regular Army supply



CPT Jared Griffel loves his job.

channels, we did whatever was required to fill the needs of the Black Lions. After a week, supplies began to flow into the battalion and company areas, providing the soldiers of Task Force 2-28 with the tools they need to do their job, and a comfortable standard of living here on the FOB.



No, not a trillion with a "T," a Gazillion with a "G."



S-6 COMMUNICATION



Upon stepping foot in FOB Kalsu, Iraq the S-6 Shop has worked day and night to ensure that the Battalion's communication assets are fully operational. Simultaneously, the S-6 shop has provided video teleconferencing capabilities which has improved soldier's morale. If you haven't participated in a VTC thus far, please do. It is one of the best morale boosters for our Soldiers.

Our first task upon reaching FOB Kalsu was to ensure that all communications platforms were fully mission capable. Through the hard work and dedication of all the Soldiers in the shop, this daunting task was completed relatively quickly. "Rodeo," is a term that every comms Soldier in 2-28 is quite familiar with. The term "Rodeo," refers to massing all the vehicles in the



Signal with Super Bowl libations

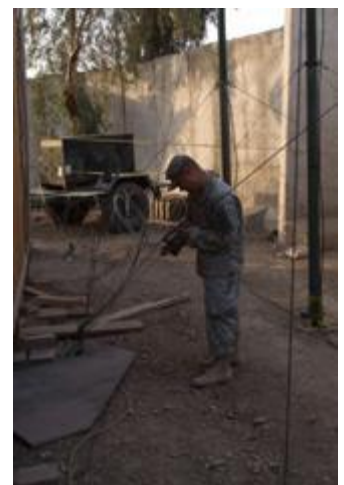
Battalion at a designated location while concurrently, identifying, troubleshooting and fixing any issues. Key players in the "Rodeo," were SSG McNicholas, SGT Price, SPC Westlund, SPC Geary, and SPC Orzille. Job well done! Nothing is more important to us than ensuring that our Infantrymen can communicate on the battlefield.

Armed Forces Network (AFN) connectivity has been a top priority for the Battalion. Giving Soldiers a taste of home is a combat multiplier. The communications Soldiers of 2-28 have crawled through ceilings, crevices and on rooftops of the Battalion HQs to allow the Black Lions to have a small piece of home. SGT Bryan Blackburn and his AFN team were responsible for setting up six complete systems.

I know that everybody is thankful for what we have achieved over this past month here at FOB Kalsu, and we are very proud to be a part of the Black Lions. We have had our share of bugs to work out since we arrived here, but no problem is too great when you have an outstanding group of Soldiers that are always ready, and always motivated to get the job done.



SPC Garrison adjusts the satellite dish.



PFC Orzel tightens radio antenna guide wires

BATTALION SPORTS DAY

Iraqi Provincial elections have kept the Black Lions safely within the walls of FOB Kalsu for a couple days. However, keeping an Infantry Battalion busy and more importantly out of trouble with this election providing downtime can prove a little tricky. Enter Black Lion Sports Day. Reigniting the competitive spirit of the 1st Annual Kuwaiti

Classic, on 25 December 2008, when Black Lion Sports

Day was born. Soldiers from each of the companies competed in a variety of matchups pitting the spirit of one Black Lion Soldier against another.

On the Basketball court, while the rest of FOB Kalsu slept, the Sports Day kicked off early with the first game staring shortly after 8:00am. SSG Herzog of HHC ran the



Black Lions Basketball

basketball tournament. Each company was represented by two teams in a single elimination tournament. HHC came out on top with a team consisting of SGT Coursey (Team Captain), SSG Cooper, PFC Conley, SGT Toomer, and SGT Peterson.

Soldiers also competed in an MRAP competition. Each team of six began with five Soldiers sitting in the MRAP with seatbelts buckled and the last soldier acting the role of a casualty 100 meters to the rear of the MRAP. At the command of the grader, the team

exploded out of the vehicle in a race against time. Competitors raced to the "casualty", secured him on a litter, moved back to the MRAP, and safely secured all members of the team inside. The winning team, with a time of 3:35 was HHC's Support Platoon consisting of SGT Gettys, SPC Julian, SPC Stacy, SPC Lane, PFC Creel, and PFC

Lumba.

Nearby, in small rings of Engineer tape, Soldiers of the Black Lions of Cantigny dueled it out with pugil sticks. Soldiers were divided into three weight classes to face off. Armed with protective gear, a pugil stick, and a warrior spirit, PFC Fiore of the HHC Scouts took the lightweight division, SGT Llewellyn of C Co 2-28 IN won the middle weight division, and SGT Rylance defeated two other Soldiers in the heavyweight division championship and returned to C Co 2-28 IN the victor.

It was a clash Simultaneously between



Sports Day, Combat Style

Wolfpack and Bushmasters for the championship on the football field. The tournament started with one elite team from each company. Going into the championship game of this double elimination tournament, HHC was stepping onto the field with an undefeated record on the day while B Co was bringing their confident stride

from their previous championship win in the Kuwaiti Classic held back at Camp Buehring on Christmas Day. Knowing they would have to win two games to tip the Wolfpack, the Bushmasters came out swinging and refused to give an inch. However, in the end it was HHC who came out victorious 12-6. The winning team con-

sisted of 1LT Martinez, 1LT Bourne, SPC Lewis, PFC Salber, SGT Horne, PFC Pickard, SPC Odeair, SPC Wolf, SPC Stone, SPC Lindsey, PFC Jones, SGT Stoute, PFC Enis, PV2 Leyvahoyt, SGT Twa, 1LT McCoy, SFC McHaney, PFC Patterson, and SPC Epstein.

Throughout the day, Soldiers of Task Force 2-28 pitted themselves against one another. In the end it was HHC Wolfpack who came out on top to win the overall trophy for the FOB Kalsu Sports Day.



Mighty Wolfpack, winners of Black Lion Sports Day Champions February 2009

NCOPD

On 01 Feb 2009, CSM Akuna and SGM Spillman conducted Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development (NCOPD) with some of the Black Lion NCOs. The topic of this particular NCOPD



Sergeant Major Spillman makes an important point during NCOPD

was focused on the Centralized Promotion System. The target audiences of the class were Platoon Sergeants and Sergeants First Class.

The class took an in-depth and behind the scenes look at the

Army's promotion system for the pay grades

of E-7, E-8, and E-9. Most senior NCOs receive broad information throughout their careers on how to best prepare for and compete in the senior level enlisted promotions. The class was based on CSM Akuna's first-hand experience as a member of a previous selection board and SGM Spillman's experience with a staff study conducted at the Sergeant Major's Academy.

An imperative task of the NCO Corps is to develop those junior within the ranks in order to develop them as future leaders. These senior NCOs are now charged with coaching, teaching, and mentoring the junior NCOs within the formation. This NCOPD provided the additional skills and knowledge to perform this task better.

SFC Brad Moses, the senior NCO in the Black Lion S3 Shop, attended the NCOPD. "This was the first time I was actually mentored by someone who had sat on a promotion board" said SFC Moses, referencing remarks from CSM Akuna. "I can't think of a better way to spend a Sunday" the vibrant SFC Moses added with a smile.

In the next NCOPD, the senior NCOs will learn how to better prepare themselves and their families for retirement.



"I can't think of a better way to spend a Sunday"



SFC Elane found the training to be informative and useful



LIONS AT LARGE

The Black Lion Prowl went to the streets to see what Soldiers like about FOB Kalsu.



SPC Smith, House of Pain

"Everything is close on the FOB, it's not as far to walk."



PFC McNamee, Bushmasters

"I like my tent because it's away from everything."



PFC Kirkland House of Pain

"The CHU's are like hotel rooms compared to Kuwait"



SPC Yang, Spartans

"I eat better here than I do in Germany"



Master Sergeant Fogg, (Air Force EWO Guy)

"I like working with this unit, I like being a Black Lion"



SPC Armenta, Bushmasters

"I like FOB Kalsu because the Black Lion is right here!"



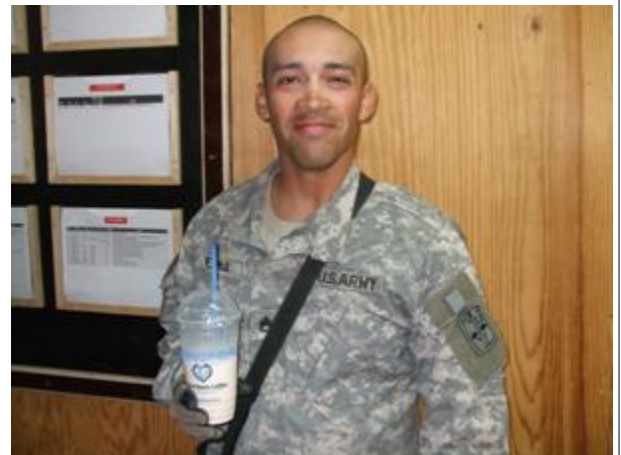
LIONS AT LARGE

The Black Lions prowled to the streets to see what Soldiers like about FOB Kalsu.



SPC George, Medic

"We have lots of things to do, like FOB Kalsu Idol, which I intend to win tonight."



SSG Medina, Mortars

"I like the Gym, DFAC and Green Beans"



SPC Jackson, Spartans

"The palm trees remind me of home in Florida"



SGT Tharp, SPC Coonce, and CPL Ryan, Bushmasters.

"We like the gym, DFAC and CHU's...and Green Beans"



SPC Gadiene, Spartans

"FOB Kalsu is the Hamptons after Hohenfels and Kuwait"



SPC Yershov Bushmasters

"I am grateful for the sacrifices of those who came before us, that enable us to grumble that "FOB Kalsu is boring."

PROMOTIONS

NICHOLAS MENDES	PFC	VINCENT WOLTERMAN	SSG
JEREMY SORNSON	PFC	VICTOR FLORES	SGT
DOUGLAS COOK	SPC	JOHN RYAN	SGT
AUSTIN FRETZ	SPC	BRENNAN SANDERS	PFC
ROBERT SHASSHERRE	SPC	TYLER SCHOMMER	PFC
BENJAMIN CRUZ	SGT	GARY BAILEY	PFC
ROBERT COSSAIRT	SGT	HENRY YOUNG	PFC
ELIJAH HOWLETT	SGT	BYRON LEYVAHOYT	PFC
AIKEN BECERRA	PFC	TIMOTHY ASHLEY	SPC
CHRISTOPHER CRANSTON	PFC	AKEEM JONES	SPC
ANTHONY MERCURIO	PFC	MATTHEW LUFFMAN	SPC
JONATHAN POWERS	SPC	KEVIN BATES	SPC
WAYLON HAWK	SGT	AUSTIN PICKARD	SPC
MARCUS FLOREZ	PFC	STEVEN CARLIN	SPC
RICHARD HART	PFC	CHRISTOPHER DAVIS	SPC
DANIEL ESGET	PFC	JONATHON FLORES	SPC
RYAN KNAUER	PFC	DTAVIUS FLOYD	SPC
NEHEMIAH ROBERTSON	PFC	STEVEN HINEMAN	SPC
NICHOLAS GRIFFEN	SPC	JOSHUA HOUSINGER	SPC
STEVEN A. SMITH	SPC	SCOTT MACHADO	SPC
WES A. BAILEY	SPC	JAMES VINSON	SGT

CONGRATULATIONS

Best Wishes to Our February Birthdays

1LT	Joshua Cobb	20-Feb-09	SGT	David Taber	26-Feb-09
1SG	Tim Ybay	2-Feb-09	SGT	Gabriel Garcia	17-Feb-09
CPL	David Johnson	25-Feb-09	SGT	Jason Jones	12-Feb-09
CPT	Jesse Greaves	1-Feb-09	SGT	Jason Klauser	21-Feb-09
CPT	Mark Beals	7-Feb-09	SGT	Kraig Walker	20-Feb-09
PFC	Abraham Salber	23-Feb-09	SGT	Lee George	21-Feb-09
PFC	Anthony Pressmar	15-Feb-09	SPC	Anthony Pittman	1-Feb-09
PFC	Corey Boleman	5-Feb-09	SPC	Armando Cardenas	2-Feb-09
PFC	Cortney Conley	16-Feb-09	SPC	Gabriel Matt	17-Feb-09
PFC	Damon Norwood	17-Feb-09	SPC	Glenn Maldonado	4-Feb-09
PFC	David Whitfield	26-Feb-09	SPC	Greg Richmond	14-Feb-09
PFC	Derek McDermeit	20-Feb-09	SPC	Ian Urquhart	14-Feb-09
PFC	Eduardo Gutierrez	7-Feb-09	SPC	Jamaris Hardy	12-Feb-09
PFC	James Murphy	22-Feb-09	SPC	James Wanser	3-Feb-09
PFC	Jeremy Jones	10-Feb-09	SPC	Jeffrey Fruchtenicht	5-Feb-09
PFC	Joseph Boyden	24-Feb-09	SPC	John Manifold	6-Feb-09
PFC	Justin Kraft	18-Feb-09	SPC	John McDaniel	10-Feb-09
PFC	Kevin Bates	17-Feb-09	SPC	Johnnie Jones	21-Feb-09
PFC	Paskasio Mitta	12-Feb-09	SPC	Michael Martin	17-Feb-09
PFC	Roddy Kelley	19-Feb-09	SPC	Michael Porras	23-Feb-09
PFC	Ryan Hagenow	25-Feb-09	SPC	Mike Paintsil	5-Feb-09
PFC	Shannon Fowler	13-Feb-09	SPC	Nikolaus Fiscaletti	4-Feb-09
PFC	Shanon Washing-	24-Feb-09	SPC	Raymond Thomas	8-Feb-09
PFC	tonhester	15-Feb-09	SPC	Robert Coombs	2-Feb-09
PFC	Wes Bailey	8-Feb-09	SPC	Steven Smith	6-Feb-09
PV2	Aiken Becerra	13-Feb-09	SPC	William McClellan	28-Feb-09
PV2	Richard Hart	25-Feb-09	SSG	Edmar Domingo	4-Feb-09
SFC	Christopher De-	1-Feb-29	SSG	Jason Crosby	24-Feb-09
SFC	Santo	5-Feb-09	SSG	Marco Presichi	1-Feb-09
SGT	Johny Jimenez	26-Feb-09	SSG	Nikolas Simon	15-Feb-09
SGT	Bradley Rylance	6-Feb-09			
SGT	Christopher Smith				
SGT	Daniel Fyfe				